

# THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## State Evangelism Conf. set Jan. 30-31

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

The 2011 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference on Jan. 30-31 at Northcrest Church, Meridian, promises something for everyone, with a diverse roster of speakers and leaders. They include:

- Bill Stafford, head of Bill Stafford Ministries in Chattanooga.
- Bob Pittman, dean of the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Preaching at Mid-America Seminary in Memphis.
- Claude King, discipleship specialist with the Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events Team of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.
- Herb Reavis, senior pastor of North Jacksonville Church, Jacksonville, FL.
- Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson.

• Junior Hill, vocational evangelist from Hartselle, AL.

• Paul Davis, minister of music at Northcrest Church.

• Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

"The State Evangelism Conference came into being because sometimes we need to be motivated, sometimes we need to be inspired, sometimes we need to be encouraged, and sometimes we need to be challenged," said Don Lum, MBCB director of evangelism.

"That's what this event is about — a time for Mississippi Baptists to come together and focus on what we need to be about in our everyday life."

"We try to bring speakers that will inspire and encourage us, people that we might not be able to get in our local churches. I think this is one of the best lineups we've had in a long time."

"Northcrest Church is being a wonderful host. They have helped us plan and get ready for this, and I want to thank the whole church and the ministry staff."

The State Evangelism Conference is held annually in different locations across the state so as many Mississippi Baptists as possible can attend without have to add in a long drive time. "You have an opportunity to really



reach the laypeople in the area on Sunday and Monday evening," said Lum. "It gives them an opportunity to come."

"Another reason we do it around the state is because it gives some of our pastors who don't have the opportunity to travel a chance to come and be a part of this. So we hope this gives them an opportunity to participate."

"I know some pastors who get someone to fill their pulpits so that they are able to come to the whole experience. They come at the beginning and stay to the very end."

"This is the first time I'm aware of that we've had it in the eastern part of the state. I'm hoping that the churches in east Mississippi take advantage of this opportunity to come Sunday night. What a great opportunity for church families to come together and worship and focus on evangelism."

For more information on the State Evangelism Conference, contact Lum at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. Email: [jellis@mbcb.org](mailto:jellis@mbcb.org).

The Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference is annually supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

### JANUARY 30

6 p.m.  
Praise/Worship  
Paul Davis, music  
Herb Reavis, speaker

### JANUARY 31

9:15 - 9:30 a.m.  
Praise/Worship

9:30 - 9:40 a.m.  
Welcome

9:40 - 10:25 a.m.  
Herb Reavis, speaker

10:25 - 10:40 a.m.  
Praise/Worship

10:40 - 11:30 a.m.  
Thom Rainer, speaker

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Lunch on your own

### JANUARY 31

1:30 - 1:45 p.m.  
Praise/Worship

1:45 - 2:30 p.m.  
Claude King, speaker

2:30 - 2:45 p.m.  
Praise/Worship

2:45 - 3:30 p.m.  
Bill Stafford, speaker

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.  
Praise/Worship

3:45 - 4:30 p.m.  
Bob Pittman, speaker

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.  
Dinner provided  
Jim Futral, speaker

### JANUARY 31

6:30 - 6:45 p.m.  
Praise/Worship

6:45 - 7:30 p.m.  
Junior Hill, speaker

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No. 3



Bill Stafford



Bob Pittman



Claude King



Herb Reavis



Jim Futral



Junior Hill



Paul Davis



Thom Rainer



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## Loose lips really will sink this ship

Disasters have struck once again in distant reaches of the globe, creating scared and hungry victims who have no idea what the future holds.

Southern Baptists — and Mississippi Baptists — will be there. They won't be featured in the headlines or spotlighted on the nightly television news, but they are there. In areas where they had to keep their heads down even before the tsunami disaster, they are hard at work to coordinate the Southern Baptist response.

Teams of trained Southern Baptist disaster relief workers are gearing up for the long-term recovery effort, Mississippi Baptists included. They will be working closely with those Southern Baptist personnel on the scene to get into areas where no Christian has trod in generations. There are at least

three ever-present dangers all of them face that should keep us on our knees in prayer around the clock:

- Many of the areas in the path of the disasters are overwhelmingly Muslim, and more than a few have been locked in civil war for many years with Islamic extremists. All relief workers, and especially those from religious organizations, could be targeted by terrorists.

- Career Southern Baptist personnel in these areas risk exposure, expulsion, or worse if their profiles get too elevated during this crisis.

- Southern Baptist volunteers could be denied admittance to any of the countries affected by the disasters. Many borders have

"PASTOR, I DIDN'T ENJOY THAT SERMON."

"OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T. IT WAS ON HELL. A MESSAGE LIKE THIS OUGHT TO MAKE YOU NEEP."



"YOU'RE RIGHT. IT WAS A TERRIBLE SERMON."

"THAT'S BETTER."



already been closed to outsiders, and scrutiny of incoming relief workers continues to increase with each passing week.

We need to understand that Christians are not welcome in many of these countries. As a television commentator put it, "Some of these governments would rather see their children starve before they accept a crumb of bread from the wrong groups." Those "wrong" groups include Christians.

The saying, "Loose lips sink ships," was used extensively in World War II, and it means that information from people who talked about which troops were shipping out and where they were going could result in the enemy acquiring the information and thus being able to sink a shipload of soldiers before they reached a faraway battlefield.

Loose lips can also sink our Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts. At a time when Christians are at risk all over the world, we must be very careful in what we say or write about the relief effort. For example, neither The Baptist Record nor the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board website will identify the countries or specific areas into which volunteers will be traveling when doing so could

jeopardize their safety or the success of their mission.

Church and association newsletters, bulletins, websites — especially websites — and other publications should be cautious, too.

The Baptist Record will keep Mississippi Baptists informed of the relief effort, but with an elevated awareness of what's at stake to help guard the safety and security of the many determined and dedicated workers and volunteers.

## GUEST OPINION:



Jim Crow  
and theology

By Russell D. Moore  
Louisville, Ky.

establishment more than anything. Those behind the signs were indeed persons. They bore a dignity that could not be extinguished by custom or legislation. I am a man.

The civil rights movement succeeded not simply because the arc of history bends toward justice but because, embedded in our common humanity, we know that Someone is bending it toward a Judgment Seat.

The Gospel that reconciles the sons of slaveholders with the sons of slaves is the same Gospel that reconciled the sons of Amalek with the sons of Abraham. It is a Gospel that reclaims the dignity of humanity and the lordship of God. It is a Gospel that presents us with a Brother who puts the lie to any claim to racial superiority as He takes on the glory and limits of our common humanity in Adam.

Jim Crow is put to flight ultimately because Jesus Christ steps forward out of history and announces, with us, "I Am a Man."

Moore, a Biloxi native, is dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press and russellmoore.com

descendants of the slaves around them.

The idea of the special dignity of the white "race" gave something of a feeling of aristocracy to those who were otherwise far from privilege, while fueling the fallen human passions of wrath, jealousy, and pride.

In so doing, Jim Crow repeated the old strategies of the reptilian powers of the air: to convince human beings simultaneously and paradoxically that they are gods and animals. In the Garden, after all, the snake approached God's image-bearer, directing her as though he had dominion over her (when it was, in fact, the other way around). He treated her as an animal, and she didn't even see it.

At the same time, the old dragon appealed to her to transcend the limits of her dignity. If she would reach for the forbidden, she would be "like God, knowing good and evil." He suggested that she was more than a human; she was a goddess.

That's why the words "I Am a Man" were more than a political slogan. They were a theological manifesto. Those bravely wearing those signs were declaring that they'd decided not to believe the rhetoric used against them. They refused to believe the propaganda that they were a "lesser race," or even just a different race. They refused to believe the propaganda (sometimes propped up by twisted Bible verses) that they and their ancestors were bestial, animal-like, unworthy of personhood.

The words affirmed the thing that frightened the racist

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## U.S. abortion rate one of highest in world

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — At some point in 2010, 37 years removed from the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, a doctor in the United States performed the nation's 53 millionth legal abortion, a sobering statistic that ethicists say should drive the public to speak up for the unborn.

The statistic is based on data compiled by the Guttmacher Institute, a pro-choice organization whose studies are acknowledged by most major pro-life organizations.

The nation's abortion rate reached a peak of 1.6 million in 1990 and has steadily fallen in most years ever since, although Guttmacher's latest data from 2008 show the abortion rate had risen slightly to 1,212,000 from 1,206,000 in 2005, the most recent data point.

Because Guttmacher no longer releases abortion data every year, the 53 million figure is based on assumptions that the abortion rate remained relatively unchanged in 2009 and 2010.

The 1973 Roe decision, coupled with the companion Doe v. Bolton ruling, legalized abortion nationwide for effectively any reason during all nine months of pregnancy.

"Fifty-three million is the population of a medium-size country. Imagine the outcry if the people of Spain (46.1 million people) were destroyed by another nation," observed C. Ben Mitchell, professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and a consultant to the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), in a Baptist Press.

"Yet most of the world is silent about the destruction of the unborn. Christian love demands that we weep compassionately for the unborn, pray fervently that the killing would stop, work urgently for alternatives to abortion, and



become the voice of the unborn in the public square."

The United States has one of the highest abortion rates for the developed world, and also some of the world's most liberal abortion laws. Mississippi has only one abortion clinic, located on State Street in Jackson. The state is considered by many observers to have some of the nation's most stringent laws dealing with abortion facilities.

The Guttmacher 2008 data, released this year, also showed that 17% of all non-hospital abortions were chemical abortions — that is, abortions performed using the abortion drug RU-486.

RU 486, also known as mifepristone, is used as the first part in a two-step process in the first seven weeks of pregnancy. Mifepristone causes the lining of the uterus to release the embryonic child, resulting in his or her death. A

different drug, misoprostol, is taken two days after mifepristone and causes a woman's uterus to contract, expelling her dead baby.

"Too many of us fail to realize the magnitude of abortion's impact on society," said ERLC president Richard Land. "If Christ-followers are not staggered by the number of babies that have been aborted since the 1973 Supreme Court ruling in Roe v. Wade, it suggests we have bought into the notion that it is permissible to take the life of a child if its birth will inconvenience others."

"As believers who should be fully aware of God's personal involvement in the creation of each human being, we have every reason to be righteously indignant at society's callous attitude toward the unborn, but more than that we are morally obligated to do something to stem the shedding of innocent blood at the hands of abortionists."

Laws are important, Land said, but it's "more important to change hearts."

"It is about changing hearts, particularly through Christ-centered ministries to women who are in what they consider to be crisis pregnancies and in teaching our own children about the preciousness of every human life," Land said.

The nation's abortion rate is so high because the large majority of abortions are done for convenience. According to a 2004 Guttmacher study of women who had had abortions, rape and incest each were cited by less than half of one percent of all women who underwent abortion.

All total, 86% cited reasons of convenience: 25% said they weren't ready for a child, 23% said they couldn't afford to have one, 19% said they didn't want any more children, eight percent said they didn't want to be a single mother or they had relationship problems, seven percent said they were too young to have a child, and four percent said they believed a child would interfere with their education or career.

## Contraceptives and abortion

MADRID, Spain (BP) — A newly published study in Spain shows increased use of contraceptives did not result in a decrease in abortions. The report in the January issue of the medical journal Contraception showed contraceptive use in women of childbearing age rose by 30% from 1997 to 2007. The rate of elective abortions, however, more than doubled from 5.52 to 11.49 per 1,000 women. The results fly in the face of the conventional wisdom espoused that greater use of contraceptives reduces the abortion rate. The study authors offered some possible explanations for this apparent incongruity, including improved abortion reporting, but said in conclusion, "The reasons for the increasing rate of elective abortion warrant further investigation." Pro-lifer Christina Dunigan wrote about the results at her blog RealChoice: "Researchers scratched their heads in bewilderment, likely because they don't understand risk compensation. If you reduce the perceived risks of a behavior, people will compensate by behaving in higher-risk ways. She added, "The Pill Pushers have chosen to ignore the data, and the reality of how human beings work. The more you create an environment in which people perceive sex as low-risk, the more people will engage in risky sex."

## Looking back

10 years ago

Mississippi College celebrates 175 years of academic excellence Jan. 24 with a convocation. The Baptist-affiliated university was founded on Jan. 25, 1826 as Hampstead Academy.

20 years ago

Ingram Church, Prentiss Association, minister of music Lee Crawford retires after serving the church for 35 years. He has taught singing schools, written songs, composed music, and organized and led the Crawford Quartet, which has sung in revivals and singings and hundreds of funeral services.

50 years ago

Gulfshore Assembly hosts the annual mid-winter Orientation Conference for newly appointed missionaries sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board Jan. 13 – 20 as the first conference of 1961.



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



## BIBLIOPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004  
© 2005

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PDFEYZXW UM YTZE,  
KX VTJX GXTSX KZEY  
RIW EVOIDRV IDO  
AIOW PXFDF SVOZFE.

OIBTCF YZJX: ICX

Clue: Y = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 16:31

## PRAYER POINTS - WHAT IS PRAYER?

From time to time surveys are taken trying to determine how many people pray. Percentages are nearly always fairly high indicating that people across America pray. I remember when the 33 miners were trapped and then eventually delivered from the mine in Chile. One of the men being interviewed said that before this he was not a praying man. During the days when they were trapped beneath a half-mile of rock, he learned to pray. In fact, during the early days they were entrapped in total darkness. They did not know if anyone knew whether they were alive or dead or if anyone was searching for them. They did not know if it was day or night or what day it was. In the desperation of that environment, he began to pray.

I suppose at its elementary level prayer could be described as a human being reaching out to God. For most of us, we have discovered that it is more than just a mental exercise. It can become an intense, personal, emotional, and spiritual encounter with God. What is involved in this experience? In today's prayer point, let me point to four elements involved in prayer.

**Talking - Prayer is our thoughts, our words, our feelings, and our needs pointed to God.** It may be that you talk to God about your difficulties. You may not feel free to talk to any other person about the push, pull, and strains of life, but you can talk to God about them. He cares, He will listen, and He can help. It may be that prayer will center on a decision. The wonderful thing is that you can talk to God about every decision. Life's greatest turns and twists or things that seem to be insignificant to others but they are important to you and indeed, they are important to God. It may be that



## • Prayer Points

you want to talk to God about your dreams or the desires of your heart. Take them to Him. Prayer does not stop there.

**Listening - Strange, isn't it, that so many times we talk to God but we do not listen to Him when He wants to talk to us?** Repeatedly Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He was talking about our spiritual ears, our spiritual sensitivity to allow God to come and bring His wisdom to whatever we may be dealing with at the time. Sometimes we may be like Samuel who heard God calling his name in the night. He thought that it was his mentor and friend, Eli. However, Eli had the wisdom to tell Samuel, "The next time you hear His voice answer by saying, 'Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.'" If you talk to God, tune in to listen to Him. Be alert through the day and in every situation to hear His voice as He gives you direction. Prayer does not stop there.

**Obedience is a key component of prayer life.** If you ask and God speaks and leads you, obey Him. At times, He may give you an answer that brings everything into focus and suddenly you realize that this is a God thing and a God moment in your life. It is a time of celebration as you obey Him. At times, when you hear from God it may

not at the moment, seem logical. It may not make sense to you. I can assure you that if you will obey Him and follow Him, you will see God opening doors and closing doors. You will come into the light of the wonder of His will through obedience. Prayer does not stop there.

**It involves staying.** By that, I mean continuing to walk with Him. Sometimes when God answers our prayers and we see His

power or the manifestation of His love we stop there, wrap it up in a package, and celebrate God's goodness. When God answers our prayers, He is simply taking us to a new level. He is opening a new realm of life and obedience for us. He does not want us to stop but to stay with Him and continue in the journey of faith and obedience. Sometimes instead of staying the course, we stop. When that occurs, we may deny or at least delay the work of God and what He wants to do in us.

While the entire life and ministry of Jesus was wrapped up in prayer, just think about the closing of His life as He prayed from the cross. Those moments led to His death...then His resurrection...then to the transformation of disciples...then to His glorious ascension. As you pray, stay with Him.

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

## STAFF CHANGES

1. **Joe Herndon** has retired after 47 years as a pastor. He pastured 12 churches, most in northeast Mississippi and two pioneer mission churches in Colorado. He now lives in Pontotoc County and is available for supply and interim work. He may be contacted at (662) 419-1933 or 297-6610.

2. **James E. Smith** recently retired from the pastoral ministry, retiring from First Church, Collins, where he served seven years. He was called into the ministry while in high school and was ordained at First Church, Magee. He was a student at Mississippi College and Southern Seminary. He has served at Broadmoor Church,

Madison; First Church, Raymond; First Church, Mendenhall; First Church, Houston; and Hollandale Church. He lives in D'Lo and is available for pulpits, supply, revivals, Bible studies, and interim pastorates. He will continue to speak at banquets and entertaining with his magic and humor. He can be reached at P.O. Box 208, D'Lo, MS 39062 or at (601) 847-4991 or 517-2468.

## MS POSITIONS

**JUNIPER GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking a Part-time Minister of Music. Resumes can be emailed to [junipergrovebc@gmail.com](mailto:junipergrovebc@gmail.com) or mailed to 289 Juniper Grove Road, Poplarville, MS 39470. For more information please call 601-795-8886.

**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH**, Cleveland, MS is seeking a paid nursery worker for Sundays and Wednesdays. Please send resume with references to: Chairman, Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 516, Cleveland, MS 38732.

**AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH** in Tupelo, MS is currently accepting resumes for the position of part-time Minister of Music. Resumes can be sent to 1138 City Rd. 931, Tupelo, MS 38804 or emailed to [jhenry@auburn-baptistchurch.org](mailto:jhenry@auburn-baptistchurch.org). The church phone number is (662) 842-5638.

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## Miss. Baptist pens novels offering pro-life perspective

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Stephanie McAllister's breakup with Sonny Shamrock was so devastating that she never told him of her pregnancy. Instead, she aborted the baby, dropped out of church in the suburban town of Westhaven, Miss., and became a reporter on women's affairs for a metropolitan newspaper.

The novel, *A Scent of Jasmine*, begins 14 years later when health issues bring Stephanie, now 35, back to Dr. Ward's clinic where her abortion was performed. There she meets Libby Anderson, the 14-year-old adopted daughter of her former pastor, picketing against abortion at the clinic.

Stephanie is unmoved by Libby's passion for the unborn but does promise to use her skills as a reporter to help Libby find her biological mother. Stephanie increasingly struggles with her pro-choice views as her love for Libby grows, but the search for Libby's mother is complicated by a death in Westhaven.

As a funeral turns to chaos, Stephanie and the town are forever changed.

"Fiction is not preaching to somebody, so you're writing a story that has to be believable and has to be compelling in its characters," said David Dockery, a Mississippi geologist and author of *A Scent of Jasmine*.

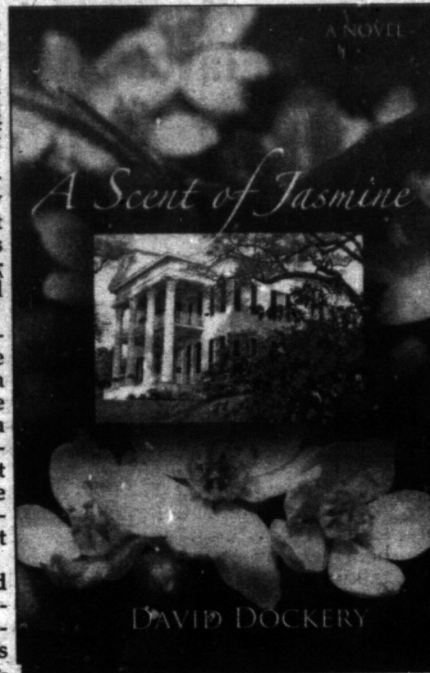
"It gave me the opportunity to portray Stephanie, who had aborted her child, as a character that people could

associate with. She explains herself in the story in a way that you could understand her and kind of see her side," Dockery, a member and Sunday School leader at Poca-hontas Church near Jackson, told Baptist Press.

Libby provided an alternate view. You can kind of have the debate within a story that is compelling, without feeling like you're reading something you don't want to read."

Though he had written two novels on other subjects, Dockery's thoughts on abortion led to a book he hopes will change hearts as part of the pro-life movement.

"As a writer, I try to think of how a reader will react when they have this reality. The story kind of writes itself [through] characters that mean something to you and you care about them," Dockery said.



"To have them go through a conversion experience on this issue, that can impact a reader. There are women in all kinds of situations like this, and a fictional story can help them sort this out."

As for how a story like this might affect a woman who feels remorse about an abortion, Dockery said it is best to come to terms with such an act, as painful as that may be, in order to receive forgiveness as well as healing and encouragement from God.

The central theme of *A Scent of Jasmine*, he said, is that each unborn child is unique and children hold unlimited promise and hope for their families, their communities and the world.

"There will be a day to come in which we will see what was missed because a child was not here to make a difference," he said.

Dockery told of a 14-year-old girl named Laney Frazier who read the book five times. Frazier's mother works with Pro-Life Mississippi, and the girl has ministered outside of abortion clinics for years. She sings hymns while her mother counsels women to choose life for their unborn children.

"[The book] touched my life about abortions. It made you want to save the lives of these babies," Frazier said. "Girls who are pregnant can pick up the book and see that there is hope. They should not feel condemned but should turn their life over to Christ."

C. Ben Mitchell, professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tn., recommended a list of five novels with a pro-life perspective:

- *Children of Men*, by P.D. James.
- *The Thanatos Syndrome*, by Walker Percy.
- *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro.
- *Winterflight*, by Joseph Bayly.
- *Healing Noelle*, by Michael J. Huckabee.
- *False Positive*, by William Cutrer and Sandra Glahn.
- *A Perfect Persecution*, by James R. Lucas.

Editor's note: Dockery's novel is available from the publisher-oaktara.com, and such outlets as amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

## First person: CP gifts have impact from Mississippi around world

By James M. Stewart  
Correspondent

The Cooperative Program (CP) is designed to combine the financial resources of participating Southern Baptist Churches and their giving members in order to communicate the Gospel to the nations and fulfill the Great Commission.

The CP continues to be the best and most comprehensive strategy for accomplishing this mission. While a percentage of CP dollars is annually directed to the International Mission Board, a portion of CP dollars is allocated to local and national strategic mission endeavors with the same goal in mind.

Members of Mississippi Baptist churches who invest in missions by giving through the Cooperative Program should be encouraged to learn of two strategic CP funded mission efforts.

The first is the Board of Ministerial Education (BME), located right here in Mississippi. The BME was established by the Mississippi Baptist Convention in 1889 for the purpose of granting a portion of Cooperative Program dollars to students preparing for ministry at Mississippi Baptist colleges and universities.

These dollars are granted solely to students who are preparing to serve the local church in ministry assignments,

from Mississippi and North America to the world. Students must complete a rigorous application and interview process to qualify for these grants and agree to reimburse the BME either with months of service equal to months of grants received, or in actual dollars.

Since its inception, the BME has given grants to students who have attended Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, the former Clarke College in Newton, Mississippi, and William Carey University in Hattiesburg. Many of these students continue to serve in Mississippi Baptist churches around the nation and throughout the world!

Ruthie Courtney, secretary to the BME for 25 years, estimates that over 25% of the current men and women serving in Mississippi Baptist churches have received MCBP Cooperative Program grants through the BME. She goes on to say, "Working with college students who are preparing for ministry and mission assignments is a blessing that should be shared with every Baptist in our state."

Courtney adds, "We are currently assisting 190 students with a \$200.00 a month grant from Mississippi Baptists. The BME recently allocated emergency funds to a student whose family home was destroyed by fire. Without Cooperative Program funds, this student would have likely withdrawn from ministry preparation."

Steve Wilson, pastor of Meadow Grove Church in Brandon, serves the BME as its current president. He adds, "The call to minister includes a call to prepare. Helping students with their financial needs while they prepare for ministry is a win-win opportunity that makes me proud to be a Mississippi Baptist."

"Every member of every church who gives faithfully through the Cooperative Program is taking part in the preparation of the next generation of church leaders locally, nationally, and internationally. To God be the Glory."

The second Cooperative Program funded strategic mission effort is KALEO. This North American Mission Board (NAMB) network is designed to assist students in "identifying and committing to a specific calling to serve God vocationally." The members of the

Board of Ministerial Education have unanimously and confidently endorsed KALEO and encourage all students who have a sense of God's calling to full time vocational ministry to prayerfully consider attending a future KALEO event.

The next KALEO event will be held at Mississippi College on Feb. 18-19. For registration information, go to [www.kaleo-network.com/events/](http://www.kaleo-network.com/events/) and click on KALEO Mississippi.

For more information about the Board of Ministerial Education, go to [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org) and click on agencies.

The members of the BME thank Mississippi Baptists, who give faithfully in participation with the Cooperative Program. Thank you for investing in the preparation of the next generation of church leaders. Without faithful Mississippi Baptists and their churches continuing to give

through the Cooperative Program, strategic mission efforts like these would lose their funding and their Great Commission impact.

Every time a member of a Cooperative Program supporting church puts even the smallest gift in the offering plate, its impact reaches all across our state and to the ends of the earth. Give faithfully in 2011. Give generously every week.

Give to the glory of God through the work of the Cooperative Program and when you do, you can be confident that you are assisting students in their preparation for ministry and impacting the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Editor's note: Stewart is senior pastor of First Church, Gulfport, and currently serves as vice-president of the Mississippi Baptist Board of Ministerial Education.



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# 2011 Associational Prayer Rallies

<b>Madison County</b> 25-Jan-11 9:00 AM	Canton City Hall 226 E. Peace St Canton 39046	<b>Chickasaw County</b> February 3, 2011 2 PM	Wilson Park West Monroe & South Church Okolona 38860	<b>Grenada County</b> February 9, 2011 10 AM	Grenada County Courthouse 16 1st Street Grenada 38901
<b>Hinds County</b> 25-Jan-11 11:00 AM	Raymond City Hall 127 W. Main St 110 Courtyard Square Raymond 39154	<b>Montgomery County</b> February 7, 2011 10 AM	Montgomery Co. Courthouse 614 Summit Street Winona 38967	<b>Tallahatchie County</b> February 9, 2011 Noon	Tallahatchie Admin. Office S Square St Charleston, MS 38921
<b>Hinds County</b> 25-Jan-11 2:00 PM	Jackson City Hall 219 S. President St Jackson 39201	<b>Carroll County</b> February 7, 2011 Noon	Carroll County Courthouse 600 Lexington St. Carrollton 38917	<b>Tallahatchie County</b> February 9, 2011 2 PM	Tallahatchie Co. Courthouse 401 West Court Street Sumner 38957
<b>Greene County</b> February 1, 2011 11 AM	Greene County Courthouse 400 Main St Leakesville 39451	<b>Carroll County</b> February 7, 2011 2 PM	Carroll County Courthouse 803 Front St. Vaiden 39176	<b>Holmes County</b> February 10, 2011 9 AM	Holmes County Courthouse 200 Court Sq Lexington 39095
<b>George County</b> February 1, 2011 2 PM	George County Courthouse Square 355 Cox St 200 Courthouse Square Lucedale 39452	<b>Panola County</b> February 8, 2011 10 AM	Pavilion on the Square (Downtown) 133 Public Square Batesville 38606	<b>Humphreys County</b> February 10, 2011 11 AM	Humphreys County Courthouse 102 Cappleman St Belzoni 39038
<b>Jackson County</b> February 1, 2011 4 PM	Beach Park 600 City Park St - Beach Blvd Pascagoula 39567	<b>Yalobusha County</b> February 8, 2011 Noon	Yalobusha County Courthouse 201 Blackmur Dr Water Valley 38965	<b>Washington County</b> February 10, 2011 2 PM	Greenville City Hall 340 Main St Greenville 38701
<b>Chickasaw County</b> February 3, 2011 11 AM	Chickasaw County Courthouse 234 West Main St. Okolona 38860	<b>Yalobusha County</b> February 8, 2011 2 PM	Yalobusha County Courthouse 14400 Main St Hwy 330 Coffeeville 38922	<b>Attala County</b> February 22, 2011 9 AM	Attala County Courthouse 230 W. Washington St Kosciusko 39090

## JUST FOR THE RECORD



4. Madden Church, Madden



5. First Church, New Albany



1. Bay Springs Church, Townsend Community, Kemper County, is having a Celebration of Dedication Jan. 30, 11 a.m., for their newly re-decorated and expanded auditorium.

2. First Church, Glendale, Hattiesburg, is hosting Ivan Parker in concert Mar. 24, 7 p.m. Tickets, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door; limited supply of artist circle tickets for \$25. For tickets or information, call (601) 582-8530.

3. Glade Church, Laurel, will host Carroll Roberson Jan. 23. Roberson will preach at 10:30 a.m. and present a gospel music concert at 6 p.m. For more information, call (601) 649-4246 or visit [www.glade-baptistchurch.com](http://www.glade-baptistchurch.com).



6. First Church, Benndale

4. The children's choir of Madden Church, Madden, presented the program, Christmas Around the World. Shown are the participants.

5. The Acteens of First Church, New Albany, enjoyed a visit from Chelsea Funderburk, missionary kid and Blue Mountain College student.

Acteen leaders are Jane Goode, Joy McCollough, and Nina Gillian; Rickey Blythe, pastor. Shown are the participants.

6. First Church, Benndale, presented The Christmas Story Dec. 19, 2010. Shown are the participants.

## One year after Haiti earthquake, many needs still there

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP and local reports) — Carved into the concrete floor of a one-room house in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, are the words "With God all things are possible."

The family living there lost their home Jan. 12, 2010, when a 7.0-magnitude earthquake shook Haiti, claiming 230,000 lives and leaving more than 1.5 million people homeless.

Now this family has a home to call their own again. It's a simple 12-by-16-foot house of cinder blocks and wood with a tin roof.

Those words — written in the local Creole language — are a powerful reminder of how God has blessed them.

"Every time they step on that doorstep, there it is at their feet," said Mark Rutledge, an International Mission Board missionary assisting with Haiti relief efforts. In recent months, Rutledge has visited more than 100 families who now have new homes.

"It's hard to describe the thankfulness people have for what has been done for them," added Rutledge, who currently is stateside but plans to return to Haiti with his family.

Through a collaborative effort called Rebuild Haiti, the International Mission Board, Baptist Global Response (BGR), the Florida Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, and Haitian Baptists plan to build 3,200 houses by the end of 2013.

The number could rise to as many as 6,200 houses, said Jeff Palmer, executive director of BGR.

Since the disaster, Southern Baptists have given more than \$13 million to relief efforts. In addition to building homes, these funds have helped provide

temporary shelters, medical care, food, supplies and clean water to desperate Haitians.

Now, the main focus is building homes at a cost of about \$2,500 each. "We like this transitional house we're working with," Palmer said. "It's just one room, but it's expandable. They can put another room on — or two rooms. It gives them something to start with that they can build on."

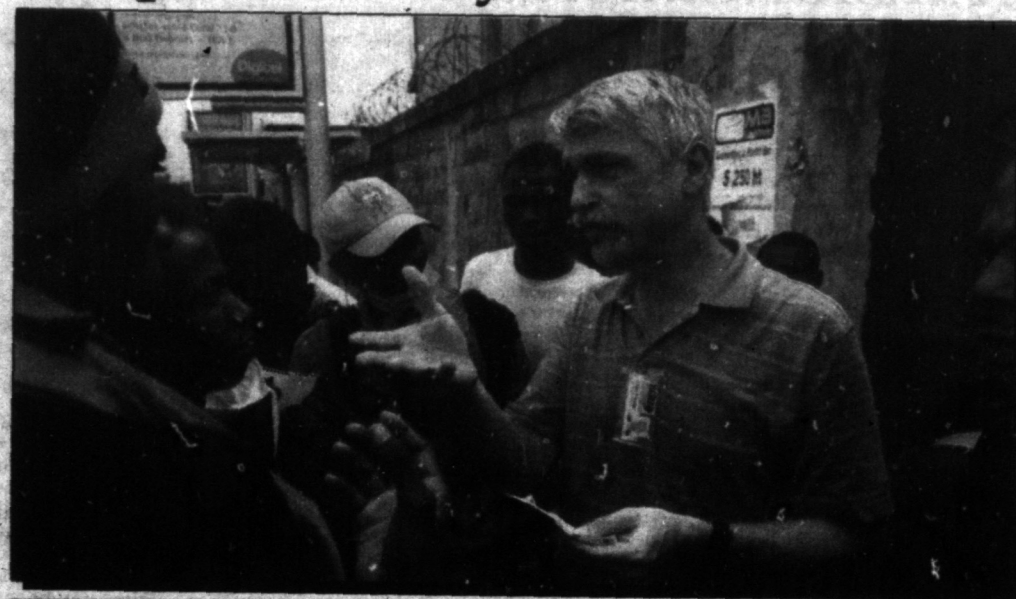
A drive through the capital city of Port-au-Prince continues to reveal the magnitude of the damage from a year ago. Thousands of Haitians still live under tarps in cramped, unsanitary tent cities.

The few Haitians whose homes have been rebuilt are spreading their joy and appreciation by helping others in their communities. Haitians are picking up hammers, pushing wheelbarrows, and working alongside volunteers and missionaries to help rebuild homes and lives.

The rebuild also is helping the local economy and providing more jobs for people out of work. "You're not just building houses," Palmer said. "You're stimulating local industry as well. The houses are all built out of materials that are available [locally]. Doing things locally, you put local people to work."

Teams of Haitians also are being trained to lead the work effort. "Our goal is to have 10 to 20 Haitian teams that are out helping to build these houses," Palmer said. "It gives them ownership, gets them involved, gives them income and a job. In the long run, it's going to take Haitians to rebuild Haiti."

Local churches also are joining the effort and reaching out to those in need. One of those churches is Shiloh Baptist Church, located on one of the



**QUICK RESPONSE** — In the days after the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, International Mission Board missionary Mark Rutledge collected names and contact information that Southern Baptist teams used to assess needs. Since then, the missionary has visited more than 100 families who have new homes. Through a collaborative effort called Rebuild Haiti, Southern Baptists plan to build 3,200 houses by the end of 2013. (BP photo)

many Port-au-Prince streets hit hard by the earthquake.

A year ago, the disaster claimed the life of the church's pastor, three church leaders, and more than 20 other members and destroyed most of their facility. In the weeks following the earthquake, many of its 800 members were living outside the church building under blue tarps.

"All our strong leaders in the church who were spiritual giants were prepared to go to the Lord... were the ones who were taken," said one member just days after the disaster. "We don't know where our future leaders will come from."

Another church member added, "The same God that

allowed this to happen can rebuild it."

One year later, the congregation worships under the leadership of a new pastor in the lower, open-air portion of their facility, which remains damaged but usable. Children's classes are now held under the blue tarps where church members lived.

"Shiloh is doing fairly well," said Rutledge, who had regularly attended the church years ago with his family. "They are actively involved now in rebuilding homes in their area... redoing and helping people to repair houses."

The Gospel also is spreading as congregations who lost their buildings relocate to areas where there weren't any churches, Rutledge said. "We have churches in places that never had churches before simply because of the earthquake bringing down the building. I think that's been a huge positive... continuing to see people baptized and accepting Christ in the church congregations that continue on."

Volunteer medical teams from the United States also continue to treat earthquake victims' lingering health problems, including those affected by the recent cholera outbreak. More than 3,000 Haitians have died from the epidemic, according to recent missionary reports.

IMB missionary Delores York vividly remembers what the first few weeks after the earthquake were like when she and her husband Sam helped with a medical clinic along Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic.

The Texas native held the hands of the wounded and felt helpless around so many who needed help. "If your head was still attached, you kind of went

to the bottom of the list," York said. "The most critical were seen first. Some people didn't get much care."

Today, Haitians still come into clinics with old earthquake wounds that were never treated. Some have indentions in their skulls. Some complain of memory loss. Others have bones that did not heal correctly.

"There's not much you can do for those things," York said. "Sometimes it's just somebody taking the time to care and take a look and sometimes pray for them."

York believes the Haiti earthquake has been a spiritual wakeup call for many Haitians, but as time passes, she acknowledges that the power of the wakeup call will dwindle.

"All of this will die out... but people are willing to talk about God, people that normally wouldn't do it," she said, noting that some voodoo witch doctors have turned to God since the quake.

York said that as Haiti fades from front-page news, she prays that Southern Baptists won't forget what happened there. "You don't see it on the news, but they need prayer," she said. "If you couldn't send money, if you couldn't go and be there yourself and help with construction, everybody [can] pray."

"The crisis isn't over. It's going to be a long haul."

**Editor's note:** For more information on the Mississippi Baptist response to the Haiti earthquake, contact the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 749-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: [dval@mbcb.org](mailto:dval@mbcb.org).



# Transformational Church program underway in SBC

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Three things make a good Transformational Church consultant: a heart for churches, a teachable spirit, and total dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Voicing that criteria is Bruce Raley, director of leadership and evangelism training and events at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. Raley has been tasked with organizing the training for individuals who will become Transformational Church consultants.

Sixty-one people attended the first public Transformational Church consultant training at LifeWay's home office in Nashville. Four state Baptist conventions — Mississippi, North Carolina, Kentucky, and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia — already have hosted Transformational Church consultant training events in their own states.

A Transformational Church, as Raley puts it, is one where people become more like Jesus, the church acts more like His body, and a community looks more like His Kingdom. "A Transformational Church consultant doesn't have to be a pastor or an expert in church programs," Raley said. "Anyone who has a heart for the church can be trained to be a consultant."

"Experience and education are good, of course," he continued, "but a Transformational Church consultant is totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. The consultant's job is to guide a church to determine its priorities and then guide the process to help the church accomplish its goal."

Consultant training is the first step toward certification. Once training is complete, the consultant will lead two churches through a consultation process using LifeWay's Transformational Church Assessment Tool (TCAT) as the basis for understanding the perceptions of the congregation. After two successful consulta-

tions, certification will be awarded.

Raley said the 15-hour experiential training is crucial because it allows participants to:

- Know how to correctly analyze the assessment tool.
- Learn to facilitate a leaders' retreat from which will come priorities for the church.
- Develop recommendations for action plans for the church to move toward transformation.
- Coach the church leaders as they implement the personalized plan.

The first step for consultants is reading Transformational Church by Thoe Rainer and Ed Stetzer, a book based on one of the largest and most significant research projects on the American church. LifeWay Research conducted the multi-denominational, multi-year research project.

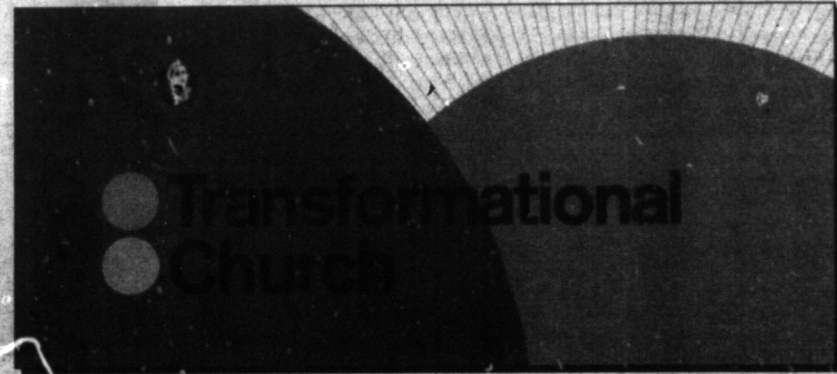
"The book gives the research findings for the Transformational Church initiative," Raley said. "In going through the book the reader will get statistics and measurements used to determine what makes a church a transformational church and will be encouraged by the stories of these transformational churches."

The second part of the process is the church filling out the assessment tool.

"This assessment tool is done online by a number of people in the church, including the pastor," Raley said. "The tool is statistically accurate, research-based and doctrinally sound."

The church can request a consultant to help guide them through the process of interpreting the data that comes from the tool. Raley told participants at the training session in November that the engagement process often goes like this:

- A pastor reads Transformational Church and watches the DVD.
- He uses the DVD to engage with other leaders.
- The church takes the assessment tool.
- Priorities and actions are established.



"You, as a consultant, can come in at any point to help guide the church through the process," Raley said. "As a consultant, you will have to resist the urge to 'fix it' for the church. It's your job to listen and ask questions."

Raley said he sees two main reasons church leaders are embracing the Transformational Church initiative. "One, churches are in pain today," he said. "Culture has changed. Keeping up is hard. We have tried the methodology and the mimicry. They haven't worked."

"Two, Transformational Church is a message of hope. It's research that shows us where God is working in churches. Transformational Church is not prescriptive. It's descriptive of churches that are seeing transformation take place in the lives of people, the church and even the community in which the church resides."

Raley said his dream is to see 2,000 people trained as Transformational Church consultants over the next four years.

Mitch Martin, leadership development strategist for the Mid-South Association in Memphis, was one of the participants. He and six others from Memphis attended.

"I can take what I learned here and go back and have some deep conversations with the pastors in my area," Martin said.

"I don't know any pastor who doesn't want his church to be the best it can be. Encouraging the churches to take the assessment and then sitting down with them to formulate their individual plans is something I will look forward to doing."

Ronnie Hughes, pastor of Brunswick (Tenn.) Church, described himself as a "pastor with a heart for churches."

"Part of my job as a pastor is connecting with other churches for the Kingdom of God," he said. "Getting this training [as a Transformational Church consultant] will help me have skills to work with the churches in my area."

Interested churches and individuals have several options in 2011 for learning more about leading churches toward transformation:

- Pastor/Staff Retreat: March 14-16, LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.
- Consultant Training: Jan. 24-26, Grapevine, Texas; Feb. 21-23, Nashville, Tenn.; March 7-9, Vancouver, Wash.; April 11-13, Nashville, Tenn.; May 9-11, Philadelphia; Sept. 26-28, Broadview, Ill.

Editor's note: Visit [www.TransformationalChurch.com](http://www.TransformationalChurch.com) for more information.

## Planned Parenthood national organization begins power play

WASHINGTON (BP) — Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the country's leading abortion provider, has made a move that will likely increase its share of the market in the lethal procedure by requiring each of its affiliates to offer abortions in at least one clinic.

A Planned Parenthood spokeswoman confirmed abortions will be provided in a clinic of each affiliate in the country, The Daily Caller reported. A waiver may be acquired, however, in the case of "unique local circumstances," said Lisa David, a senior vice president for the organization.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America has 95 affiliates and 865 health centers, according to its latest annual report, which covers the 2008-09 fiscal year. Under the new rules, at least one clinic per affiliate must perform abortions, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman told The Daily Caller.

The 2008-09 report showed Planned Parenthood received \$363.2 million in government grants and contracts during the year. Its affiliates performed more than 324,000 abortions in

2008, the latest year for which statistics are available.

News about Planned Parenthood's new requirement broke when its affiliate in Corpus Christi, Texas, withdrew from the organization and changed its name. The affiliate became Family Planning of the Coastal Bend on Jan. 1, according to the Corpus Christi Caller-Times.

Amanda Stukenberg, chief executive officer of the Corpus Christi chapter, said the affiliate had never provided abortions because local doctors performed them.

Pro-life blogger Jill Stanek, a former nurse whose testimony helped in passage of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act in 2002, wrote, "I imagine that inside the industry, abortion wars are breaking out even as I type, as PP makes a major power play to wipe out independent abortion mills."

"This is huge, devastating for babies. Statistics bear out that the more abortion mills there are, the more abortions there are."

Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood continues to lose funding from corporations.

Kohl's and Mrs. Fields are the two latest companies to stop their donations to Planned Parenthood, LifeNews.com reported Jan. 3. The announcement came from Life Decisions International (LDI), which tracks corporate giving to Planned Parenthood and publishes a boycott list of corporations that support the organization. The list may be ordered for a fee.

The announcement about the two companies follows the best six-month period in LDI's history. "[M]ore corporations have been removed from the boycott list between

the July 2010 and December 2010 lists than have ever been dropped in the past," LDI President Douglas Scott said, according to a Dec. 10 report by LifeNews.

Ten companies were dropped during the last six months, Scott said. They included Enterprise car rentals, Toys "R" Us, Forbes magazine, and Rolex, LifeNews reported.

Normally two or three companies per six-month period announce they have withdrawn their support from Planned Parenthood, Scott said. More than 270 corporations have halted donations

to Planned Parenthood, according to LDI. The pro-life organization had its genesis in Scott's founding in 1989 of a project to inform corporate leaders of Planned Parenthood's abortion business. It incorporated as LDI in 1992.

They included Enterprise car rentals, Toys "R" Us, Forbes magazine, and Rolex, LifeNews reported.

Normally two or three companies per six-month period announce they have withdrawn their support from Planned Parenthood, Scott said. More than 270 corporations have halted donations

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# Analysis: Current Tunisia unrest part of rich history

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dramatic political changes are occurring in Tunisia on North Africa's Mediterranean coast between Algeria and Libya. Southwestern Seminary professor Malcolm B. Yarnell III reflects on a visit to the country, its rich Christian history, and the need for the Gospel to flourish there once again.

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Alongside several other professors, John Mark Yeats and I led a group of students to Tunisia several years ago to study North African Christian history and theology. Today, we see occurring what the media has dubbed a Jasmine Revolution, which is apparently the first populist rejection of an Arab leader and the first governmental change wrought through the activities of Wikileaks.

President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who is accused of having ruled Tunisia on behalf of the economic interests of what became known as the Family, has fled the country. It is still unclear as to what the form and composition of the government will be, and the interim government itself already has changed structure in a matter of hours as the frantic search for constitutional legitimacy and political stability vie with one another.

The place known today as Tunisia has a long and colorful history. Phoenician traders settled there around the 10th century B.C., establishing a colony that became the world power known as Carthage in the sixth century B.C.

The Carthaginian navy's capabilities, shrouded in secrecy, and the Carthaginian army's tactics, exemplified in Hannibal's surprise march through the Alps, were nothing short of brilliant, even as their religion was marked by incredible brutality.

Phoenician ships brought a barbaric religion from the Middle East, which was affiliated with the god known in the Old Testament as Molech.

Molech's priests were particularly adept at the sacrifice of infants by making them "pass through the fire." The Carthaginians sacrificed their own children to Kronos, or Saturn, according to ancient historians, by placing an infant on the hands of the bronze god, hands which were then raised by hidden priests through a pulley system, dropping the helpless child into a gaping maw to be consumed in flames.

The bones of the infant would then be interred in a small stone sarcophagus and were often deposited in the foundation of a new building, such as a private home. So many were sacrificed in the hope it would bring happiness and prosperity to a new family.

The Western idea that children are an economic burden worthy of abortion was thus prefigured.

Hundreds of children at a time also were sacrificed during times of war as a way to appease their offended god. The vigor with which the Israelite king Josiah suppressed such misguided brutality is, to say the least, understandable (2 Kings 23:10). To this day, I cannot forget the haunting scene of thousands of small stone sarcophagi still littering ancient Carthage outside modern Tunis.

The children paid for the sins of their fathers, at their fathers' own hands.

When, in the second century B.C., the Romans finally put an end to Carthage at the conclusion of the third Punic War, they salted the site of the city built developed the rest of North Africa into a breadbasket for Rome itself. Roman cul-

ture followed Roman agriculture as it spread through North Africa, south toward that oceanic desert now known as the Sahara, east toward modern Libya and west into Algeria.

Tunisia is filled with ancient sites containing coliseums, temples, and palaces from the Roman period. The surviving mosaics that abound there are absolutely beautiful and indicate an advanced culture.

Christianity thrived in the early centuries in North Africa, in spite of the intense persecution the Christians often suffered. The saga of Perpetua and Felicitas, two young Christian martyrs, still inspires those who read of the suffering of these faithful witnesses. The ancient arena in which the Christians were martyred in Roman Carthage and many of the early churches are accessible today.

Providentially, in spite of the intent of the imperial authorities, the blood of the martyrs proved not to be the burial of the church of Jesus Christ, but the seed for her growth, as Tertullian noted.

As the church of North Africa grew in both difficult and easier times, it produced a number of very important theologians — especially Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine — who shaped the way Western Christians think about their faith.

Tertullian was a converted Roman lawyer active at the turn of the third century A.D. This groundbreaking church father developed the rudiments of the Western understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. His refutation of the modalist heresy has been most helpful to those who desire to see God as the Bible reveals Him to be.

Tertullian also expressed misgivings about the innovative doctrine of infant baptism, even as he flirted with the spiritualistic and ascetic heresy of Montanism.

The early churches of North Africa, many of whose ruins are still in existence, long retained the architecture of a New Testament faith. There is nothing more informative than seeing with one's own eyes the extant visible evidence of the North African baptisteries standing, sometimes in the pattern of a womb, at the very entrances of their churches.

Moreover, these earliest baptisteries were fully immersionist. The late historical development of infant baptism with sprinkling is readily perceptible, for small raised baptismal fonts were placed centuries later in and over the old immersionist and often richly-decorated mosaic baptisteries, the ruins of which have been preserved in the semi-desert open air.

Cyprian came from the Roman colonial elite itself and brought a stable leadership to a church experiencing even more thorough persecution under the emperors Decius and Valerian. After the Decian persecution, Cyprian led the way in providing church fellowship to those Christians who had lapsed under persecution but who subsequently repented.

One of his most famous works, On the Unity of the Church, has been the source of both inspiration and tribulation for those churches dependent upon his theology of episcopacy, due to the work's existence in two variant forms.

From a free church perspective, Cyprian's legacy is most difficult, for the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers offering spiritual sacrifices was lost in the midst of his advocacy of episcopal authority, sacerdotal administration of the sacraments, and his peculiar sacrificial presentation of the Lord's Supper.



ANCIENT BAPTISMS — In the ruins of a church in Tunisia, Malcolm Yarnell III of Southwestern Seminary stands in an immersionist baptismery that, centuries later, gave way to a small raised font for infant baptisms. Christianity is woven through the fabric of the country as political unrest continues to rise. (BP photo courtesy of the Center for Theological Research, Southwestern Seminary)

On the other hand, encouraging all later Christians, Cyprian remained firm in his Christian faith and was executed in 258 for refusing to sacrifice to the imperial cult.

Though Augustine of Hippo's bishopric was based over the border in modern Algeria, he spent a good deal of his life in Carthage. The mental portrait of Augustine's mother, Monica, standing at the dock as her son fled her presence for a profligate life in Europe, is one that should strike any Christian mother's heart.

Be encouraged, Christian parents, for Monica's fervent prayers and continual witness ended in her son's conversion.

Augustine describes his conversion to Christ (and presents a sublime view of the relation between eternity and time) in his introspective and authentically open Confessions, a must read for Christians.

After his conversion, Augustine returned to North Africa, where his works were instrumental in helping Western Christians understand that salvation is entirely by divine grace, as he fought against the works-salvation taught by the British monk, Pelagius.

Unfortunately, at the same time he underscored divine grace, he also led the church to embrace the conscience-violating doctrine of the baptismal regeneration of infants.

In yet another controversy, with the Donatists, Augustine argued for the universality and unity of the church, but horrifically, through the advocacy of governmental coercion of unbelievers and dissenters into the state-supported churches. In yet another controversy, against the pagans, who were blaming the fall of Rome in 410 on the rise of Christianity, Augustine worked out a comprehensive philosophy of history, inclusive of both the sacred and secular.

His monumental The City of God is simultaneously majestic and utterly persuasive. In his 15 books on the Trinity, Augustine established the Western view of the relations between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, a view that ultimately ended in the theological division of East and West.

Augustine's days ended as his city of Hippo was under siege by the invading barbarians, who would restructure and

shape Europe as we know it today. Augustine of North Africa remains the premiere theologian of Western Christianity, thus the faith of most Europeans and Americans remains in profound ways an African faith.

Although Constantinople under Justinian the Great recovered North Africa, the Byzantine empire could not retain its hold in the face of the onslaught of military Islam. Christians (and Jews) survived for centuries under Muslim rule, and huge Christian graveyards are still in evidence, but with time and the slow persecution of the "dhimmitude" system coupled with periodic onslaughts of intense persecution worsened by the invasion of the Sicilian Normans, Christianity (and Judaism) were eclipsed by Islam.

As I survey the photographs of protest-torn Tunisia, I remember the beauty of the cities and, most importantly, the beauty of the people. I also remember the calls to prayer at the local mosque that wafted through our open windows every morning.

Mostly, I remember that Tunisians are now suffering. There are many young people who need stable employment, and all Tunisians are doubtless concerned about what tomorrow will bring them. The people I encountered in Tunisia were kind and wanted to know about these wandering Christians, and, with appropriate prayer and cultural sensitivity, they were open to hearing the Gospel.

This brings us to the primary purpose for this post: Would you please pray for Tunisia? For her political freedom and stability, and for the Gospel of eternal peace, once again, to flourish in this beautiful land.

Yarnell is associate professor of systematic theology and director of the Center for Theological Research at Southwestern Seminary ([www.swbts.edu](http://www.swbts.edu)) in Fort Worth. Yarnell also is managing editor of the Southwestern Journal of Theology. John Mark Yeats, referenced in the first paragraph, is assistant professor of church history and director of Southwestern's travel study program.



## THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director  
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### GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 1-15, 2010

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## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE A Lifestyle of Sacrifice

Luke 9:23-62; Luke 21:1-4; Romans 12:1-2

By Becky Brown

Every time I quote Luke 9:23, I think first of Jesus. Then, I remember Dr. Avery Willis, author of the MasterLife discipleship study. Way back last century, his picture of The Disciple's Cross helped me see that I, too, have a cross to carry for Christ. Those old song tapes for scripture memory have cemented the words of the verse into my brain and heart forever. Jesus said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

During January 2011, we have been learning about the lifestyles of community, humility and service. This week, we study the lifestyle of sacrifice. The plain old bookshelf dictionary defines "sacrifice" as the act of offering

something to God. Sacrifice is also the offering presented. In other words, you sacrifice (verb) a sacrifice (noun). In tandem with the word sacrifice, you will usually find the word "surrender" which means to willingly yield something to the possession of another. The Word of God (which has never been plain and which will never be old, but is always new every morning) defines "sacrifice" and "surrender" in terms of the one Who gave His life for us. God spells sacrifice J-E-S-U-S. Jesus spells sacrifice Y-O-U and M-E.

The giant step in the lifestyle of sacrifice is to follow Jesus in salvation which leads to humility, community and service. He gave His life for us. We should be willing to lay down our lives for Him.



Brown

enough to pick up our own crosses to follow in His steps. Decades of personal experience deepen understanding. When I get up and pick up my cross daily, I make progress. When I get up and leave my cross lying there, I stumble and fall and make no progress. Scripture provides a critical piece to the sacrifice puzzle in Romans 12:1-2. Paul tells us that we are to be living sacrifices. Sadly, most Christians would rather skip the challenge of these verses. They'd rather drink another cup of coffee while reading other more pleasant devotional materials than to determine daily to be the living sacrifices

God desires. If we are shaped like the world, we look nothing like Jesus. When the sacrifice puzzle is complete, it will be a picture of Jesus with His hands stretched out in surrender, yielding His life willingly to His Father and calling us to do the same.

Luke 9:57-61 introduces us to Woula, Coula and Shoula. I call them the three "hesitators." Jesus called them to follow. In response to Him, they did their perfect imitations of Moses at the burning bush, "Lord, here am I, send somebody else." Jesus compares them to the farmer and the plow. In our grocery store can world, folks do not get the plowing thing. Picture a farmer and a plow and an animal pulling them around a field of fresh dirt. All is well as long as the farmer keeps his eyes forward and his hands on the reins and the plow. Straight rows will be the result. If he is distracted and looks away, the rows look like spaghetti. He may as well plant rows of HESI-TATERS.

In Luke 21:1-4, we read about the gift of the widow. Folks came with huge offerings of part of their wealth. Jesus watched as this poor woman gave everything she had as an offering. She gave the widow's mite. Jesus praised the widow's might. Her heart was strongly surrendered to God. Jesus was not impressed with some of their sums. He praised one who gave all. She silently spoke His language.

I am because You are the Lord. I hear because You speak the Word. I believe because You said it is true. I wait because I trust in You. I grow because You plant me deep. I go because You came for me. I stand because You make me strong. I walk because You lead me along. I can cry because You hold me close. I sing because You lift me up. I feast for You supply my need. I live because You died for me.

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE Sick of Greed?

2 Kings 5:14-16, 20, 22, 24-27

By Dr. W. Wayne VanHorn

Years ago Jesus' statement from Matthew 10:8b became important to me, "Freely you have received, freely give." This statement summarizes Christian life well. In this week's lesson we see a contrast between a prophet who operated out of grace and his servant who operated out of greed. The lesson's title is directed to each of us individually. Are you "sick of greed?" Greed is an insatiable beast. The more you feed it, the more it wants. If you are not careful, you will spend your entire life feeding a creature that one day will devour you. God wants so much better for you.

The graceful prophet was Elisha. He freely received a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2:9-15). This "double portion" blessing meant God had anointed Elisha to pick up where Elijah

left off. He would be able to work miracles by God's power and to proclaim God's word with boldness. Elisha used his "freely received" grace to "freely give" healing to the Syrian general, Naaman, from skin disease.

How did Naaman react to such an act of free grace? He began by saying, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel" (2 Kings 5:15; NIV). Some interpret this statement as an expression of mere exuberance over his long desired healing. Others see in Naaman's words a genuine expression of faith in Elisha's God. Either way, the Lord brought an extraordinary healing to a man, whose skin disease had made him an outsider. God's power, flowing through Elisha, resulted in Naaman's healing.



VanHorn

Naaman added, "Please accept now a gift from your servant." The general freely received a gift of healing; he freely offered a gift in return. Elisha declined the offer. Why should he be rewarded for God's grace? When Naaman came out of Jordan's

waters that seventh and decisive time, Elisha was out nothing. Therefore, he said to Naaman, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing" (2 Kings 5:16; NIV). Though Naaman "urged him," Elisha refused to take a gift. He chose not to cheapen God's grace by reducing it to a business transaction for personal aggrandizement. Interestingly, Elisha revealed his theology of grace. First, the Lord was alive, in contrast to the idols Naaman served. Second, Elisha envisaged himself standing before the Lord. Everything Elisha did was reviewable by God from whom he had freely received the double portion of Elijah's spirit. Freely he received; freely he

gave. He refused Naaman's gift. Enter the servant. Gehazi was Elisha's attendant. He had a front row seat to observe Elisha's gracious acts and attitude. However, in contrast to his master, Gehazi was motivated by greed. Using the same oath formula Elisha used to refuse the gift, he swore, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him" (2 Kings 5:20b; NIV). He took the oath of death. Whenever we choose to "run after" money or things instead of experiencing God's grace, we make the choice to feed the insatiable beast.

Gehazi hurried after Naaman" (2 Kings 5:21a; NIV). The Hebrew term for "hurried after" means "to pursue." Gehazi was on a mission of greed. Once he caught up with Naaman, he concocted a lie about two young men who came to Elisha needing money and clothes. Naaman complied. Gehazi took the money and garments (2 Kings 5:24). He then went and "stood before his master Elisha" (2 Kings 5:25). Elisha had been motivated by grace to

help Naaman. He could stand before his master, the Lord, because he freely gave from what he freely received. Gehazi had been motivated by greed to take money and clothes.

As he stood before his master, Elisha asked, "Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or manservants and maid-servants?" (2 Kings 5:26; NIV). The expanded list of possible gifts probably reflects what Elisha had been offered over the years of his faithful service. He accepted no gifts, opting to freely give of the grace he had freely received. Since Gehazi lied to Naaman, misrepresenting his master, Elisha rewarded his greed by giving him Naaman's skin disease. Gehazi traded grace for greed. In the end, he became an outsider sick of greed!

Van Horn is Dean of Christian Studies and the Arts at Mississippi College.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcc.org.



# SBC president encourages 'return to our first love'

First in series

NASHVILLE, Tn. (BP) — The December/January edition of SBC LIFE includes an interview with Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright, who also serves as pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga. Following is a transcript of the interview, which took place Sept. 21 following his address to the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville.

**SBC LIFE:** What is your vision for your ministry as president of the SBC?

**WRIGHT:** As I mentioned today, it's that we would return to our first love, Jesus Christ. That is the starting point. I realize that's not a measurable goal, but it is the heart of what I would love to see happen — in individuals, but also in the local church and the denomination. In losing our first love we have allowed the "isms" — materialism, hedonism, the workaholicism of busyness, and even churchianity versus a true relationship with Christ — to take precedent over the relationship with Him. When that happens we lose our spirit, we lose our heart, and we lose a passion for lost people. We've let culture influence us more than we have influenced culture for Christ.

Growing out of that would be a love for the lost. I hope that Southern Baptists will really get serious about a radical reprioritization of the Great Commission. That would first be demonstrated in personal giving. The reality is most who are professing Christians in our churches give little or nothing to the Lord's work. That shows they really love their money more than they love Jesus. That's a sad reality. And it's a huge burden to me, especially when you consider how God has blessed the Christians of America and the impact that we could have on the world in sharing the Gospel by using the financial resources that have been entrusted to us. We have a window of opportunity that we need to make the most of and have an urgency about.

**SBC LIFE:** Do you have any kind of action plan or steps that you would like to take in order to help Southern Baptist churches recapture that first love?

**WRIGHT:** Really, just urging it to happen. It's why we're urging local churches to hold solemn assemblies... in January 2011 as a way we can call on the Lord to help us return to our first love of Jesus. But also, in light of what has happened with people going on mission trips at Johnson Ferry, I'm going to be emphasizing the value of mission trips. And that means having people really go [and] not just giving and praying. A lot of

our people at Johnson Ferry have returned to their first love because they really become passionate about the Kingdom enterprise that Christ has us called to. When we step out in

discipleship training, you're developing a Kingdom vision.

**SBC LIFE:** Do you have any other ideas to help churches recapture their first love?

Baptists as any denomination. I'm just haunted by Jesus' story — not just what happened to the younger brother, but what happened to that lost sheep — Jesus taught about leaving the

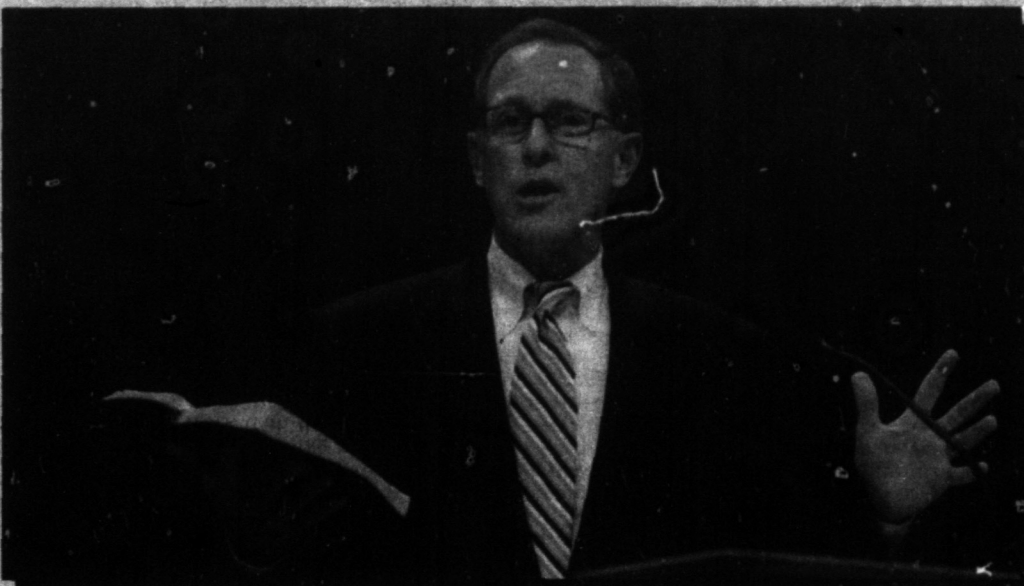
**WRIGHT:** I'm asking the folks on the Committee on Committees to seek to have dedicated Christians who love the Lord, love the Word, but look more like the Christians who make up our convention — not just the Christians who make up the leadership of the convention. And it's not just black and white — there are also Hispanic and Asian — we're a very diverse lot. But when you look at the leadership out front in the convention, you don't really see an accurate reflection of the ethnic diversity in our convention as a whole. We've got to be very intentional at this point in reaching out, and I hope that will be the case.

**SBC LIFE:** I don't think most Southern Baptists know how ethnically diverse our convention is.

**WRIGHT:** Some of our African-American pastors feel like they are on the fringe. That is very unhealthy; it's not good for us and it makes us a poorer people spiritually. We want to get a taste of heaven to see what it's going to be like when every ethnos (ethnic group) and tribe gather around Jesus.

**SBC LIFE:** Currently, almost 95% of Cooperative Program funds received by the Executive Committee go to fund the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board and the six seminaries. You are on record saying that your church divides its support for SBC ministries at five percent to CP and five percent directly to IMB. If Southern Baptists across the land follow the example of Johnson Ferry, some are concerned that funding for these other ministries could be dramatically impacted. Given what you have led your church to do, what would you say to pastors concerning the priority of funding IMB, NAMB, and seminary training through the Cooperative Program?

**WRIGHT:** Well, the reason Johnson Ferry has chosen to give equally through the Cooperative Program and directly to the IMB is so we can give more to international missions. But we definitely know the seminaries need more money. They are training the future leadership of our churches for carrying out the Great Commission in our churches and on the mission field. Certainly we want to be a part of that. Our burden is how much is staying in the states, especially in the Bible Belt states where there are so many SBC churches. But we certainly don't want to leave the seminaries and NAMB out of the equation.



Wright

faith and are willing to sacrifice time and financial resources to go to another culture to share the Good News of Christ, it has a way of getting our priorities back where they need to be.

**SBC LIFE:** Earlier this evening you mentioned the role of spiritual training when people prepare for mission trips. Does discipleship training become easier when people are training for a specific ministry event or trip?

**WRIGHT:** It really does. Going back to that first trip during spring break in the early '90s, I asked our student minister just to get away for a few days of prayer and fasting and to pray about what could be done to give a new vibrancy to the student ministry. I wanted them to have the chance to do something sacrificial and to work with the poorest of the poor. Now that really struck a nerve with them. And we required that they go through eight weeks of discipleship training; it was intensive discipleship — I mean two hours every Sunday night. For all of our trips, each person has to learn how to share his or her faith, we talk about quiet time, and we talk about cross-cultural issues that they're going to deal with. That really enriches a church when so many go through that.

**SBC LIFE:** That is such an important component. If we suggest that merely going on mission trips will bring people back to their first love, it's not just going on the trip...

**WRIGHT:** That's right, it's also the preparation. In that

**WRIGHT:** There's nothing more important than the pastor preaching the Word and feeding the flock. At Johnson Ferry, one of our core values is an unchanging message with an ever-changing methodology. With every generation, even every few years, the methods in doing ministry change; but you never compromise the message. It's hard to overestimate the impact of a church hearing the Word of God from the pulpit in a way that they can apply in their everyday life. When you do that through Bible study classes, from children all the way to senior adults, then you're really building disciples. It means having Bible teaching as central to who you are. We don't have any better discipling tool than the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. My style of preaching is much more a teaching style. I realize historically in Southern Baptist life we've been very strong on evangelistic decisions, and I think as you look at what's happening at Johnson Ferry, you see that. But I think people would tell you that my style is really more teaching with an evangelistic dimension to the teaching.

**SBC LIFE:** Do you have any other strategies for cultivating a return to the first love?

**WRIGHT:** Well, I would hope that in all of our teaching of the Word, the major focus is Jesus. The danger is, the longer we're in the church, if we are not careful, we can become like the elder brother in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. The longer you're in the church, the more you tend to become like the elder brother. That's as true of

99 sheep and going out to get the one. That's the heart of God. And I just hope that's the heart of people in our churches.

**SBC LIFE:** In some churches it's almost as though Jesus has been reduced to merely being the way to enter into heaven, but after you get your "heaven pass" we focus on all these other things in the church. The ongoing significance and centrality of Jesus can be overlooked.

**WRIGHT:** That's right. Jesus must be central to our message. He must be central to our Bible studies. We must always be reminded of how He dealt with sinners. One of the things I love about Jesus is that there is obviously nobody more devoted to the Father's will than Jesus, but He was totally loved by lost sinners, and they loved Him. The religious people didn't like Him, but He was so loved by sinners. If we can have that kind of spirit — the spirit of Jesus, that spirit and character of Jesus and the mission of Jesus — then that's where we need to be.

**SBC LIFE:** For more than a year, the Executive Committee has been working in response to a motion made at the 2009 Convention encouraging the SBC to have a broader ethnic representation in its leadership. What steps can you take as president to increase visibility and participation of individuals in convention leadership that would reflect the reality of our convention's multi-ethnic makeup?